> sandwich bbq chatter laughing masquerades, costumes and the eternal carnival (Parish 2008).

This passage superbly captures a festival that, while today populated by a mixed bag of electronic and acoustic music, retains its psychedelic legacy. Though by no means universal, psytrance producers signpost flow-states with tracks employing strategically programmed vocal samples. Often woven into the breakdowns and animating the escalation, nanomediations function like audio bombs which have a devastating impact on the phlegmatic and the immovable, like that dropped in Eat Static's "Nocturnal Umbra" via an old B&W sci-fi movie (*Crash and Burn!*, 2000): "the terrifying sounds of the monstrous cosmic radio mutations unleashed upon the jungle from a rocket run wild". As apparent in the productions of Eat Static, Tristan, Dick Trevor, Pogo, Raja Ram, and many others, by the end of the 1990s a psychedelic irony was not atypical to the environs of a dance floor showing its rave inheritance. In the pharmacological fantasmagoria of acid house, ravers were plugged into game-spaces and cartoon-like worlds in which Ecstasy-charged avatars were freed from their everyday responsibilities. With the arrival of acid-trance (Goa/psytrance), the electronic Toon Town reverberated into the new millennium, and was equally alluring. Thus, Mumbo Jumbo's "Weird, Sick, Twisted" had Homer Simpson hammering "I saw weird stuff in that place last night. Weird, strange, sick, twisted, eerie, godless, evil stuff … And I want in" (*Psychedelic Electronica 3*, 2000). Smiles appear across the dance floor and posses crack up as medleys of pop-narratives, cult icons and screen actors are plumbed, edited and re-cast to star cameo roles in this retrograde theatre. The dance floor finds a new use for things, in wacky Gibsonian fashion. Mocking the imperious and taking a hatchet to hubris are customary to the trance carnival in which ostentatious displays – military uniforms, the garb of religious officials, and aristocratic sportswear – are intended to empty these symbols of authority and divert them to other ends. As DJs spin tunes power-pointed with vocal samples lifted from official and popular sources which become edited and mashed-up within audio-subvertisements, authorized reality is jammed, *détourned* and parodied by the nano media technicians of psytrance. One oft-sampled source is Willard Cantelon's LP *LSD: Battle for the Mind* released in 1967 by Supreme Records, a division of the Glendale, CA-based Bible Voice Inc, a goldmine for producers plying the parodic imagination. Nystagmus's "Tommy is Dead" (*The Immaculate Perception*, 2005), for example, reproduces Cantelon narrating the tragic tale of Tommy Forester, a "good-looking, personable, athletic" young man who had a "high IQ" and who, according to his Dean, "had the best potential of any man in his class". But Tommy's problem was acid.

> At first the LSD made him sick to his stomach. But then Tommy began to hallucinate. The air began to be filled with rainbows. The very atmosphere seemed to be a moving current of multicolour particles which came streaming down around him. When he listened to the stereo he saw coloured particles floating out from the speakers. When he looked at the walls they seemed to be melting. The pictures on the walls became liquified with colours running down like waterfall. It was sensational.

In this lifted statement Cantelon inadvertently paints a Daliesque vision. Clever and timely plunderphonics orchestrating a radically different outcome than that intended by their authors, cause contagious laughter to erupt among inhabitants who appear contently marooned inside outlands that may have drawn inspiration from Wonderland, Lilliput and the adventures of Pantagruel. It takes a sophisticated operation to sail this far from civilization, to wittingly lampoon order and form, for habitués to parody themselves, even burlesquing the fiction of an integral self – the individuated whole person that is, in other circumstances, the subject of aspiration. Unstable mind states are routinely embraced within these contexts, as invoked by the sampled material. The Twisted Allstars – the one-time collaboration of Simon Posford, Tristan Cooke, Sajahan Natkin and Serge Souque – are a case in point. Lifting lines from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *American Psycho*, their "Blue Sky on Mars" (*Twisted Sessions Vol. 1*, 2002) conveys: "It don't make a *bit* of sense to me … If *that's* what bein' crazy is, then I'm senseless, out of it, gone down the road, wacko!" Allusion to substance-influenced conditions of mind alteration and disorientation are par for the course and may arrive, for example, care of HAL 9000, with a sampled line shorn of its original context: "My mind is going" – as heard on Sandman's "Bad News" (*Witchcraft*, 1998).

The temporary defectiveness of mind amplified in scripted lines lifted from cinema serves to narrate the fiction of one's disembarkation from normality on the dance floor. Of course this is not simply fictive since the psychedelic festival facilitates a phenomenal transit. With a knowing wink, on "Charlies Trip" (*Liquid*, 2001), Australia's Mr Peculiar (Dustin Saalfield) animates the fantasy with a familiar line repurposed to evoke the effects of a hit of LSD: "Welcome to you, the lucky finder of this golden ticket … I feel funny … Oompa loompa, oompa loompa, oompa loompa, doopity-doo". Like the reception of text, voice samples are "received" in unpredictable ways despite the intentions of producers. On the dance floor, like inner-voices, sonic texts serve to enhance, satirize, even deride, practices of self-derailment, braggadocio and other arrogations. Here, dance experience may be the subject of considerable reflexivity, within an electro-carnivalesque trajectory which makes mockery of all unfunky pretentions, sharp-lines, head trips, and genre fundamentalism. This development is furnished audiologically in styles that "break" up the lines

of "progressive" styles in fusional sounds like psybreaks, suomisaundi and ethnodelica with influences from electro and breakbeat sonifying dance floors whose occupants are hipsters and beatfreaks charmed by the distracting breaks negotiated into trance. Facilitating an oscillation between functional and performative states, electro musics – funk and techno derived, and often referred to as "afternoon music" – are the benchmark sonics of distraction that have come to dominate the soundscape of the psychedelic carnivalesque. Black Rock City is exemplary, with Burning Man accommodating a style of music – breaks – suited to its location and conditions. While an electro-breaks aesthetic enabling distraction may be endogenous to bohemian scenes, the physical conditions of the Black Rock Desert – where surrender to progressive rhythms is interrupted by the requirements of survival in extreme conditions – have necessitated a Burner-style electro music. While Goatrance was integral to past "sound art camps" at Burning Man, psytrance would become drowned out in later years by a cacophony of electro-oriented breaks and dubstep, a circumstance that may also be related to the relative dearth, in the US, of large psychedelic festivals: those aesthetic laboratories and cultural economies crucial in an age of music file-sharing.

As "breaks" deconstruct the beat and eschew earnestness and athleticism, a sonics of distraction – an electro funk – reverberates across the grounds of the trance carnival. And, as Kodwo Eshun wrote in relation to funk:

> Mutant bass dissolves the rigidity of hipness, collapses the distance that Cool demands. As a homeopathic agent, "Funk not only moves, it can remove" the sensation of feelin walled-in, closed-up, cased in armour. It squirms like a tapeworm, heaving and contracting along your intestines. It's a bassnake that undulates the inert abdomen and pelvis in S waves, snakemotions that sidewind along the thighs (1998: 08[149–50]).

This description relates most clearly to the first of two interpretations of "funk" outlined by Scott Hacker, meanings relating to the corporeality, and, more to the point, intercorporeality, of dance. As he explains, the musical definition of "funk"

> is that which moves, irresistible, an ineluctable conclusion of motion ('dedicated to the preservation of the motion of hips'), and of course it's always On The One. The other usage of the term refers to the smell of funk – earthy musk, the purple smell of global vagina, the source of jazz in sweat, saxophone jism, the smell of spontaneity and origination, funk giving birth to funk, the fertile rhythms of the song cycle, life and death, conception and birth in dirt and secretions, the visceral funk of sweat and sex, pussy

> rotation, the stank thang, the glory of juices in vapor reacting at base level in the gut, gut bass thumping spleen … in all fertility awareness the funk figures as smell, cosmic progenation, funk of dame nature in labor harmonizing with funk of loose booty boarding the Mothership, the smell that leaves us "standing on the verge of getting it on" (Hacker 1994).

The "Mothership" referred to here is that which was captained by P-Funk in the 1970s, the orchestrators of the en-funked dance floor, under the aegis of funk. Despite the prejudice George Clinton expressed towards the body danced by electronic beats, the EDM dance floor lies at the crossroads of these meanings, especially that which shakes within the carnivalesque precincts of a dance festival, and, moreover, festivals at which participants camp for periods ranging from a night to over a week, where festal-goers are exposed to each other's bodies: in coital encounters, feasting, ablutions, excretion, etc. Psytrance festivals are grounds for the experience of funk, where dance floors, especially during week-long events, become like malodorous swamps where earth stomped, sweat excreted, tears shed, drinks spilled, and waste discarded over several days and nights cause the "stank thang", a rising effluvium under and through which the assembled dance.

Hacker's description evokes that moment where the dance floor breaks down boundaries between habitués, a population subject to the breaking beats and mashed sound-bytes, and yet whose shifting beat structures and kinky pulsations animate those same denizens. "Funkiness" is a performance paradox with unpretentious and flamboyant elements. While evoking a *nastiness* embodied in the manky, sticky and frowzy conditions shared by cohabitants of a floor that has seen successive days/nights of hard labour, it also signals a *sweetness* of style and affect. And while it evokes a diminution of individuality in "trance" (becoming other), it signals availability (to others). Soundscapes of the contemporary psyfestival animate the bumping attraction – in particular the progressive "afternoon music" produced by the likes of Perfect Stranger, Ace Ventura or the funky electro-pulsations of Neelix, such as "Disco Decay (Edit, 2008)" (2008) – and the allure of sexual pressure amplified via the suggestive storylines of minimal electro, as in Jey & Ex's "Inside Me", which features a woman moaning and demanding the listener to "come inside".[14] Thus, "funky" might be repulsive, and it might be compelling – surely a most ambiguous condition.

While there will be debate concerning the place or legitimacy of funk within a movement which possesses transcendent spiritual paths, funk is a signature hip-shifting propensity of the trance carnival, perhaps more so at those points where the lines fuse and new aesthetics emerge. One such "place" is suomisaundi, the free-form Finnish cross-genred trance self-identified as "spugadelic". Though maintaining the 4/4 beat, this convention-breaking

Ozora 2009. Photo: Pascal Querner.

trance holds influence from techno, funk, jazz and blues, as found in the work of Evsy and Haltya, and traced back to Flippin Bixies. Finnish free-form styles can also be traced back to GAD's abstract 1996 release *Apollo 3d* and other releases on Exogenic and Australia's Psy-Harmonics, especially Texas Faggot, and found on releases like the *Hippie Killer Collection* (2007) and *Hectic Dialect* (2009). Haltya (Jürgen Sachau & Tommi Sirkiä) have been instrumental in the development of the Finnish sound, with their *Electric Help Elves* (2004) promoted as "funky forest trance".[15] "Kaikados", a Hidria Spacefolk remix on this album, is a dense ecology of swirls, electrified twitters, and synth guitars. These challenging arrangements, like the funk-spugedelic "Mothership" featured on Haltya's *Book of Nature* (2008), possess an experimental ecosystem of sounds that places listeners at a *progressive* remove from Goatrance, and indeed progressive trance.

Tribal trance and neotrance

This diversity of expression, and yet singularity of intent, is symptomatic of a neotribalism in which participants readily adopt the "tribal" moniker to identify themselves. While a variety of differences – national, ethnic, class, gender, as well as those associated with genre – are performed within party precincts, the dance floor is imagined to orchestrate their transcendence. Curiously, both processes in this dynamic attract the designation "tribe" or "tribal". The

inclusive sensibility where distinctions are putatively obliterated within the temporary dance conflagration is an experience commonly regarded as "tribal", while the amplification of identity within the dancescape is also figured to be an expression of "my tribe" *vis-à-vis* "your tribe". The difference engine powers a mechanism by which difference is orchestrated *and* resolved, and therefore gives expression to a cosmopolitan dynamic in which the extinguishment of divisive barriers and respect for difference are coincident. The logic is not simply that of "being together", as in Maffesoli's (1996) thesis of "de-individualization", but a *coming together* of multiple and disparate genres, fans, etc., as is demonstrated by Rainbow Serpent and Exodus festivals, as well as Germany's Fusion Festival, Boom and, for instance, California's Symbiosis. While a utopianism is echoed in commentary like that of Goa Gil who celebrates a "global tribe" – "a tribe that's beyond and transcends nationalities or national borders or even cast, creed, color or any of these things" (in McAteer 2002: 83) – the unfolding phenomenon is no homogeneous monoculture without internal divisions. It is a tribalism that is decaled with an iconic litany from the cosmic to the gothic, enlivened by disparate narratives from the romantic to the dystopian, and inhabited by those performing diverse subject positions.

The tribal festival, then, allows its inhabitants multiple freedoms, including the freedom to join one's flame to the conflagration, and to hold self-promotions on and off the dance floor. Exemplifying the festal-life flourishing in the contemporary, Boom affords this commotion of singularity and freakiness, this dissolution and presentation of self-hood. Energized in rare fashion, across this spectrum one shifts between spectacular states of self(less)ness. Evincing the corporeal ambiguity of "funk", participants may experience fusion with, or autonomy from, others in extraordinary states of altered consciousness/embodiment. Organizers of events, in collaboration with DJs, producers, sound engineers, visual and décor artists, optimize space, time, art and other resources to realize the dynamic that I dub *neotrance*.[16] This term emerges as an adjunct to "neotribe" and owes its appearance to my dissatisfaction with the term "trance" as a catchphrase for a cultural movement. With the *OED* describing six definitions, "trance" is one of the most poorly defined and nebulous terms in the lexicon of those describing alternative states of consciousness (see Cardeña 2011: 4), a confusion apparent within psytrance circles. More specifically, it derives from the suspicion that traditional conceptions of "trance", particularly "possession trance", and especially the analogy with what Emma Cohen (2008) calls "executive possession",[17] are ill-suited to recognize the experiential complexity of dance festal behaviour, and in particular the experience of "trance" endemic to the psychedelic festival, its music, and its dance. Indeed, psychedelic trance calls for interpretation deviating from conventional theories of "trance" (and possession) – from traditional (e.g. Winkelman 1986), to Western (e.g. Taves 1999) manifestations. In various cultural contexts deriving from West African

and sub-Saharan traditions in particular, patterns of animation identified as "possession" (by Gods and spirits), such as those agents associated with *vodu* and *orisha* possession complexes, typically serve therapeutic and divinatory purposes in communities where religious specialists, cults and shrines are devotional vehicles for deities and spirits, where altered states are interpreted via inherited religious frameworks, and are integral to the life of communities where human and spirit worlds are intricately interwoven.[18] While the psychophysiological impact of percussive and rhythmic music (Rouget 1985) may hold across traditional and contemporary trance performance,[19] and while DJs, scholars and participants invoke loose folk-theories of divine guidance, conventional understandings of "spirit possession" tend to offer overstated, unfair and misleading frameworks for understanding "trance" dance cultures associated with contemporary popular music.

When lazy contrasts are the hub of comparative analysis, the usefulness of research should be called into question. Commenting on raves, Georgina Gore (1995: 137–8) claims that, compared with possession trance within cults of the Southern Nigerian Bini, rave is "a rite of passage leading nowhere … It is a ritual without content, ecstatic, solitary and narcissistic. It is a game of chance; its trance is aleatory and dizzying". Raving might apparently exemplify the zombification of modern life, a disappearance from meaning, the "zone" entered perhaps as pathological as that ascribed to the world of gamblers and casinos, an observation which partly explains the poaching from Baudrillard in early rave studies where ravers were apparently disappearing into a world of appearances (see Melechi 1993). Illustrating the results of an ethnographic approach to raves which would deliver us closer to the "trance" in question, Melanie Takahashi (2005) seeks to understand the alternative states of consciousness endogenous to these events. She argues that through DJ techniques, optimized audio-visual production and performance, and participant expectations at raves, "technological advancements may compensate for the lack of coherent cultural signifiers" *vis-à-vis* "the sophisticated scripted process of initiation observed in ceremonial possession" (Takahashi 2005: 253). Ravers remain "horses", only now they are ridden by the spirit of the optimized audio-visual assemblage channelled by the "shaman" DJ. Through these techniques and sound-art strategies, which Morgan Gerard (2004) calls "liminal techniques", by comparison to other popular music forms/techniques, DJs are arguably better able to "control the means of perception" (Takahashi 2005: 254). Aided by prolonged physical exertion and psychoactive alterants, audio and lighting techniques (sonic and photic "drivers") have indeed been optimized to induce the psychophysiological effects of trance-like states – a motivation that "trance" labelled and marketed music has inherited from earlier styles. On *Rainbirds* (Music & Sound, 1995), Astral Projection's early incarnation, SFX, made an effort to effect trance states via wave-like pattern electonica with direct influences from

Jean Michel Jarre.[20] Their "Noise on People" from that release induced a kind of meditative dispossession from mind-states in which awareness of primary bodily sounds and processes are filtered out. As the sample used indicates: "soon you become aware of the overwhelming nothingness, and then strange biological noises … the rushing of blood through the body, the heart pounding, the bones creaking, the sound of breathing". But while the dancing subject may be free from cares, there is no universally accepted intelligence on the liminal zone between waking and dream states. And so while it makes sense to hold inquiry about the capabilities of newer and adapted technics to animate and energize participants – and indeed entire communities of sound – in raves, psytrance and other EDMC events, persistent analogical modelling with spirit possession becomes burdensome in itself.

With the objective of revealing the sacred terrain of raving, François Gauthier harbours no such intellectual burden. He argues that rave "is not a possession trance, unless perhaps possession by 'nothing'". Ravers "do not feel 'something' (or indeed 'nothing') is overcoming them. On the contrary, it seems this overwhelming feeling originates from within, only they cannot say *how* or *where*" (Gauthier 2004a: 78, original emphasis). "This trance", he continues, "is the desire for pure instituancy, pure experimentation with an otherness that remains confused and diffuse – a pure gratuitous act, or a simple gesture of revolt". Psytrance, as I have argued in this book, offers the context for entering oblivions of this nature, but it is also charged with meaning, is guided by "projects" and is held to be efficacious. Like rave, psytrance can be characterized as "unhinged from a defined and institutionalized – and therefore – explicit religious system that could explicate its meaning". But to argue that "techno trance is sought in *itself* and for *itself*, detached from any defined meaning, aim or purpose" (Gauthier 2004a: 79) is not an accurate description of psychedelic trance. To begin with, in trance culture there is a persistent desire to associate with traditional trance practices. It is believed that the psytrance experience holds value for its practitioners in ways that are equivalent to these authorized cultural practices. That organizers have sought to associate their events with master practitioners of Moroccan Gnawa, as in the 2005 Rhythms of Peace festival, that Sufi dancers were billed for the opening ceremony at Soulclipse in Turkey in March 2006, or that ceremonial dance is performed to didjeridu performed by Indigenous custodians in the Opening Ceremony at Australia's Rainbow Serpent Festival, all reveal conscious efforts to associate the event experience with traditional "tribal" music and ritual practice. In other projects, the techno-trance assemblage is recruited in the directed rite of passage, as in the work of Goa Gil, Ray Castle, DJ Krusty (2008), and in the initiatives of The Oracle in Seattle, LA's Moontribe and other groups for whom the "trance" experience possesses a psycho-therapeutic function.

Yet the development of intentional ritual trance techniques with clear cathartic objectives is uncommon, with psychedelic culture providing no systemic grounds for interpretation of the "trance" experience (see Davis 2001), which, as this chapter has indicated, is complex. If the trance experience holds a therapeutic function, it is subject to individual experience, unique expectations and contextual temperament. If the technicians of ecstasy and the media shamans of trance produce the conditions of being-in-transit, as argued in Chapter 4, then travellers of the breach are obliged to fill it with significance. It is the remit of party organizers and producers to provide a suitably optimized event, but a successful experience is reliant upon the individual partygoer, his or her travel and networking experience, the application of intelligence gathered on a host of matters, and their ability to cobble together the accoutrements of ascension. As this chapter has shown, one of the principal objectives of partygoers from the inception of the Goa landings is to become free from their concerns outside the party and beyond the moment – to become dispossessed. A transnational festival apparatus evolved with this *ekstasis* among its chief considerations, but passage for its occupants relies upon their own experience, cognition, networking skills and resourcefulness. So while there are no master healers, nor consensual frameworks through which states of animation are interpreted and performed within psychedelic culture, self-dispossession is typically sought and engineered. Various allegorical devices recombined from popular culture are used across genres to signify and effect this condition. Earlier in this chapter, I discussed the commitment to *alienation*, a Goa legacy where the figure of the alien signifies difference facilitated by its erasure of all difference. Within the cosmic carnival, the alien is adopted as a mascot for a dispossession that is hopeful of a positive outcome for the self. But this is not the only ride at the psychedelic fairgrounds, given that dark trance has emerged as a popular theatre of the self-dispossessed. Becoming free from rational subjectivity is itself the rampant obsession of darkpsy producers, enabled by horror cinema and served up on nocturnal dance floors: sanity lost (to psychosis), the human abducted (by the alien), the faithful possessed (by the devil), the victim slain (by the serial killer), the innocent attacked (by the beast), the worker enslaved (by evil robots), the citizen's mind controlled (by the CIA), the survivor transformed (by Nazi zombies on acid). In all scenarios, the monstrous is redeployed from screenplays where such figures evoke the visceral terror associated with the annihilation of self. While the pervasive figure of the benevolent, raceless and androgynous alien became totemic for the cosmic carnival, the monster would signify darker shades of dispossession. A similar objective prevails, however: to orchestrate the frisson associated with the departure from consciousness. From the cosmic carnival to the dark carnival and carnivals in between, the desirable state of de-subjectification conveys interest in becoming free from agents of control, principally

one's own consciousness, the overwhelming commitment to surrender one's possessing self. Freedom from the "iron cage" of rationality, a radical experimentalism that potentiates the performance of difference, is the Romantic and utopian legacy in psychedelic reflexivity.

Dispossession is therefore fashioned in the remix where diverse pop-cult figures, religious icons and voices are recombined, and where the dancer becomes discombobulated in the company of friends and strangers. This topsy-turvy recombinant theatre returns us to Bakhtin, whose "grotesque realism" offers a useful heuristic with which to approach psytrance. This is with qualification, since successful dispossession, or alienation, may be predicated upon excluding that which jeopardizes the mission, which threatens the *otherness* of the world temporarily inhabited. In his study undertaken after the scene's virtual demise in its site of origins, Saldanha (2007a) concluded that the erasure of difference in trance in Goa relied upon the elimination of phenotypical signs of differences – namely brown skins, with the purity of white bodes signifying the desirable transcendence. In this freak "crowd crystal" (Canetti 1962), the liquidation of difference relies upon the accentuation and hardening of the distinctiveness of protagonists, elitism also observed by Joshua Schmidt among Israeli *trancistim* (2010). This said, as evidenced by the trance carnival globally, and within the wider Disctopia of EDM, multiple elements jeopardize the "vibe", are inimical to making *It* happen. In a realm of competing expectations, tourists (including those with white skins), authorities and "straights" imperil the conditions of self-dissolution, freak performance and *instituant* desire.

* * *

This chapter has approached the vexing subject of trance dance itself, the *raison d'être* of the psychedelic festival. The psychedelic "trance" experience is an historical product of radical reflexive modernity whose Disctopian worlds apart and in between have enabled habitués access to extraordinary states of mind and body. Enabled by new technologies of the senses and facilitated by Eastern travels emerging at an important juncture in the Space Age's Cold War era, the *cosmic carnival* was the early and enduring apotheosis of this movement for desubjectification in dance. In the new architectonic of trance, a *progressive* techno-aesthetic emerged as a dominant technics of transcendence. The optimal "trance" condition was figured as an optimized "flow" state with iterated challenges sufficient to satisfy enthusiasts. Moving to stand still, to accomplish no-thing, provides a useful way to understand the music and festival culture of psychedelic trance whose "weekend societies" in regions worldwide propagate, weekend in and weekend out, the "progressive" experience. Yet "trance" is at the same time characterized by the persistent effort, in psychedelic carnivalesque fashion, to parody, overturn and up-end

the progression, to scatter one's thoughts, to muddy the truth. Nothing, after all, is annihilated by the funk.

At events downstream from the cosmic carnival, like Boom, accommodating progressive and funky trends, enthusiasts oscillate between states of self-dissolution and self-expression, where indeed the chief performance is the spectacular departure from rational subjectivity. *Neotrance* has been identified as a neotribal dance cultural phenomenon potentiating the performative dissolution of individuality, an ekstasis/theatre dynamic involving surrender to the flow and a freakish dramaturgy. As recognized in the previous chapter and reinforced here, with psychedelic trance parties and festivals that have inherited and repackaged the Goa "state of mind", the dance floor is the site on which travellers experience the dismemberment of identity through luxurious states of abandonment, experimental conditions which are also creative exaltations. A nest of popular cultural tropes are redeployed to echo and effect the desire for self-alienation, voluntary control-loss, and the dispossession from rational subjectivity. From the cosmic to the dark carnival, varying sounds are piped through the mothership to orchestrate these conditions. From the soaring ascensionism of cosmic trance to the gothic struggle of darkpsy, and from the frenetic pace of full-on to the smooth landing of ambient, different stages, floors and their musics in the greater festival may harbour different "projects", but the carnival of trance is a stage upon which the individual must work it out for her or him self.

7 Psyculture in Israel and Australia

Israel and Australia are global centres of psytrance, with *mesibot* and *doofs* – the respective terms for parties in these nations – local domains for the expression of global psyculture. The ethnographically informed insights in this chapter uncover scene developments in these countries, and psyculture more widely. Goa/psytrance came to an unusual prominence in Israel, where it became a popular music. With sixty-six psytrance labels in 2011 (representing 7 per cent of world labels), Israel is one the greatest per capita producers of this music internationally. With thirty-one labels in 2011 (3 per cent of world labels),[1] Australia is less productive by contrast, yet renowned internationally for its summer festival culture. As this chapter illustrates, these national scene developments demonstrate the diversity of post-Goa psyculture as it became translated in countries with disparate cultural, historical and geographical conditions. While all too brief, these examples show how aspects of Goa/psytrance have been pressed into the service of religious, spiritual, counter-cultural and intellectual agendas in the respective regions, and how national and cultural climates have shaped a mix of agendas, from the rebellious to the proactive, as evidenced among party organizations, events and labels. They also provide examples of how national psycultures are comparative sites for the expression of originality, which, as indicated in the book's introduction, refers to the *origins* to which participants lay claim and the *original* work produced. Psyculture participants harness symbolic resources and commit to sensory practice in the claiming of heritage, the revival of tradition, the return to the primordial, all inflected by local history, religious traditions and prevailing socio-political conditions. These practices are ongoing, and should be understood as innovations through which novel forms are created from the mix of existing elements. While no singular narrative prevails, amid the carnivalesque noise of psyculture, as moments of clarity, connection and continuity, the dance floor is the ultimate grounds for a *religious experience* recognized by participants across these diverse national scenes.

Israelis in the Temporary Autonomic Zone

I travelled to Israel for six weeks over Sep–Oct 2007 – a brush with the world power in psytrance. The 1960s appear to have had a relatively cursory impact in Israel, but in the early to mid-1990s Israeli youth became animated by a contumacious sensibility by way of Goatrance. The "countercultural" character of Goa in Israel would be heavily influenced by global rave culture, which, as some observers have pointed out, already carried a shallow "simulacrum" of 1960s counterculture (see Rietveld 1993). By the 2000s, psytrance had achieved stature as a popular music in Israel, a strange circumstance not replicated in any other nation. Israel is an international powerhouse in the production, distribution and performance of psytrance, which became one of its chief cultural exports, provoking challenges to the music culture's ostensible "countercultural" character (Schmidt 2010). In 2007, I detected the sonic signature of psytrance echoing from pleasure craft on the Red Sea, animating apartment buildings in Mitzpe Ramon and even played to supermarket shoppers. I received the distinctive thud of full-on repeating from passing motor vehicles in Jerusalem. During the course of my stay, I attended two festivals, the Holy Rave and the TAZ, both of which I discuss in the following.

The proliferation of psychedelic trance in Israel cannot be understood in isolation from the nation's complex historical, religious and cultural circumstances. I have been struck by the frequency with which psytrance "makes the news" in Israel, and it is immediately apparent that the mediatization of psytrance echoes the diverse agendas commentators want it to serve. Given its popularity, psychedelic trance has been a controversial subject in national media for twenty years, though nightlife and dance scenes have attracted outcries and delegitimation in Israel for decades, as Nissan Shor relates in *Dancing with Tears in Our Eyes* (Shor 2008). In an essay published in the Zionist venue *Azure*, Assaf Sagiv (2000) observed that, following centuries of dormancy, the Bacchanalia have "returned with an intensity unknown since the end of the classical period". Apparently an embattled "hothouse of permissiveness in the conservative Middle East", Israel was at the forefront of an international ecstatic dance movement. As Sagiv continued, "the ancient fertility cults which the zealous followers of the Hebrew God sought to extirpate three thousand years ago have come to life again in the land of Israel". Throughout the late 1990s and in the following decade spokespersons from different locations in the political spectrum admonished the wayward antics of the nation's youth, especially at those points of exposure to the outside world. The new "culture of ecstasy" raised alarm among critics apprehensive of misguided youth (e.g. Taub 1997), and triggered moral panic among Zionists concerned with growing transnationalism (Meadan 2001). But the voices were as varied as the agendas psytrance became enlisted to serve. In his article, "Land of the Rave", Daniel Belasco (n.d.) drew comparison

between psytrance and orthodox religious practice at its most ecstatic: "The dancing can be related", claimed Belasco, "to 'shuckling' the back-and-forth swaying of orthodox Jewish men in prayer. Trance music also evokes niggunim, repetitive sung Hasidic melodies that promoted impassioned spirituality to combat the modernization and secularization of Judaism". He also noted that since many trance festivals are held on Friday night (Shabbat) or during the various calendar holidays, this precludes participation by Orthodox observant Jews, because the "weekend" is effectively one day only (Saturday). Nevertheless, these events provide "the opportunity for secular Israelis to create personal rituals to connect to the sublime aspects of Judaism". As Belasco continued, "held in remote forests, beaches, and deserts, raves bring urban Israelis closer to the beauty of nature, to the very land dreamt of by modern Zionism founder Theodor Herzl in Vienna at the end of the 19th century, and fought for still today by the Israeli army". These comments offer sharp perspective on the quest for origins, the observance and defence of Orthodox tradition that assumes stature among spokespersons of Israeli psytribalism. Yet, in an expression of the concurrent commitment to novel conditions, in a localized romanticization of the psytribal Disctopia, Belasco stated, "Israeli raves also embody longings for cultural and spiritual unity with other people". Comparing these events with gospel music and whirling dervishes, "by linking their Jewish spiritual ecstasy to that of other cultures … they aspire to overcome the particularism of being a member of 'the Chosen People'". Of course, such attitudes do not go uncontested by other religious Israelis (or *dati'im*) and passionate "returnees" to Judaism who, warning of the consequences of straying from the path, continue to fire salvos over the heads of enthusiasts (see Ganihar 2011). Others indicate evidence that for many returnees to Orthodox Jewry, attendance at *mesibot* provided the initial spark for their religious conversion. According to Schmidt (2011: 131), many are "full-onistim", that is "hard-core ravers who re-directed their passion for trance music to strict religious observance (often tinged with Hassidic overtones) as an auxiliary method for gaining spiritual ascendance". The notorious Breslov Judaism, named after mystic Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, has attracted a large contingent of former *trancistim*[2] "after 'finding' religion via drug-induced ecstatic states of consciousness". And psytrance, apparently, remains part of proselytizing practice, with Breslov-*trancistim* known to drive "nachman-mobiles" – vans rigged with speakers playing full-on mixed with samples of Nachman's teachings.[3]

For Sagiv, the lament was that Israeli youth had become pessimistic, passive and disengaged from everyday life, since they preferred to "lose themselves in psychedelic festivals rather than come to terms directly with the complex realities of personal and public life in a country in conflict". The plaint inferences the stressful social and historical conditions in which Israelis are born, especially those raised in the period following the Six Day

War (1967) and Yom Kippur War (1973). This generation was raised in a time of transition, in which the nuclear family, religious life, labour stability and gender relations underwent transformation. Yet, while there has been a decline in traditional values and structures since this period, the fulfilment of rigid work and study obligations remained a requirement, with a strict "social timetable" placing pressures on individuals to become married and successful "adults" by the time they turn thirty (Maoz 2005: 163–4). Furthermore, this generation was achieving young adulthood inside a cultural pressure-cooker: the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the al-Aqsa Intifada (or Second Palestinian Uprising) from 2000, ongoing tensions with Syria, Hamas suicide bombers, official paranoia, and international condemnation. The mandatory three-year service in the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) for males and two for females, and the permanent state of readiness, evidenced, for example, by the Second Lebanon War which broke out in July 2006 and lasted for five weeks following the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers by Hamas and Hezbollah and the shelling of settlements on the northern border, renders coming of age in Israel a troubling experience with which young adults in other liberal democracies are rarely familiar. Anxieties are accompanied by feelings of impotence and a corresponding sense of anguish which, Sagiv argued, triggered a Dionysian impulse apparently more concentrated and determined than 1960s/1970s precursors in the US, Europe and Australia.

This emergent ecstatic impulse would be expressed, in part, in travels outside Israel, in the form of backpacking – principally to Asia and South America, but especially India where temporal self-marginalization constitutes a response to the stressful experience of growing up in the Middle East, with the eventual cultural investment in psytrance incited by the pressures of dutiful citizenship and social obligations. In an age of globalized media, *trancistim* have responded to the absence of the freedoms recognized to be enjoyed by youth elsewhere around the Westernized world. Israeli psyculture is thus a vociferous, audacious and ludic reaction to freedoms denied – freedoms found in a *performed exodus* from the pressures of everyday life. "Enclaves" of backpackers in Goa, Manali and elsewhere are said to "play out" the role of colonizers in what Noy and Cohen (2005: 17) refer to as a "third frontier", which reflects symbolic components of the other two (i.e. the Israeli Diaspora and Israelis living in occupied Palestine). As Noy and Cohen explain, this is a metaphorical, playful "colonization", and we might observe ludic travails beyond the national boundaries enabling self-styled enactments of the myth of Abraham who, as Goffman (2004: 12) noted, was "history's first self-exile". The exodus is not uniform, however. While an historical exodus mythology has been recruited to a transnationalist utopianism which has existed since the inception of Goatrance as it was translated and developed in Israel, for many the "exodus" simply translates into transgressive and rule-defying hyperbole, with the sampling of drugs and music the popular front

for an outlaw aesthetic (see St John 2012a). Here the "exodus" is articulated more in terms of that which participants seek departure from (i.e. restricted liberties), than any particular outcome, destination or reformation.

Militarism has greatly influenced the spectacular abandonment of the self in Israel, equivalent to that of the shaping influence of India. It was in 1988 that Israeli passport holders were first permitted to India. When young travellers stumbled into nascent bohemian electronic trance scenes in Goa and Manali (and Thailand) in the late 1980s and early 1990s, many had recently completed their military duties. India would also become a point of departure for more permanent expatriates. According to Smadar Waisman, a former IDF intelligence analyst who now resides in India, and among a reported 40–60,000 Israelis who live there (from 7.7 million Jewish citizens in 2011), "military service turns good young Israelis into corrupt and insensitive people. We're forced to follow orders and do and see horrible things that no young person should be involved with. If you want your soul to survive the anxiety and depression of Israel, you leave for Goa" (Copetas 2009).[4] While backpacking around the world has become a post-service rite of passage, the psychedelic sojourns sought by travellers could hardly have been anticipated by authorities. In Goa and other exotic locations at an extreme remove from the Holy Land, those Schmidt characterizes as "uninhibited psychonautic trail-blazers" (2006: 11) could undertake vertical flights with the assistance of the usual fare: *charas*, LSD, Ecstasy, and *psilocybin*-mushrooms, perhaps washed down with *qat*. Removed from social, religious and military obligations, psychonauts would enter other holy-lands, and entertain experimental post-service identities. Yet the "war machine" – which Georges Dumezil identified as an experience of "puissance" falling in between and outside the operations of the state, an idea of undisciplined itinerancy informing Deleuze and Guattari's "nomadology" (1986) – would become a mobilizing force. Having participated in the IDF, *trancistim* were now conscripts in the legions of the night. Many Israeli backpackers in India and elsewhere fresh from military service and travelling in *hevreh* (solid group of friends) have been characterized as "conquerors" (*havokoshim*), who "engage in arduous treks and rapid and constant transit between localities and countries". As Maoz (2005: 181) explains, these travellers

> do not come into contact with the locals, but enclose themselves in a environmental bubble consisting of those similar to themselves – Israeli tourists of the same age. They express an attitude of superiority to the locals and do not desire to learn their culture; on the contrary, they seek to appropriate it by "conquest" and by introducing Israeli culture to it. During the backpacking journey they relive the army experience of intensive, arduous activity, centering on strength and physical prowess.

These young travellers are said to extend the "moratorium" in the passage to adulthood already established during military service – though as Noy and Cohen suggest (2005: 11–12), practice is not simply a *continuity* of service but a *reaction* to it which can be expressed in a ludic manner by backpackers who may joke about Thailand, for example, being "in our hands!" While the attitude of the *havokoshim* might explain Israeli backpacking behaviour in Goa, those who have been identified as "the Manalis" (*haManalim*) are perhaps closer to the rule. Also referred to as "party children" or *karhanistim*, their journey involves the consumption of drugs, notably *charas* made in Manali. These backpackers are similarly stated to hold an indifference, "contempt" and "belligerence" towards locals. But these self-identifying categories do not apparently exhaust the full range of contact behaviour, for older backpackers (in their early thirties) who remain in toured regions for longer periods and regarded as "the settlers" (*hamitnahalim*) are said to "show an attitude of respect and esteem toward the Others among whom they settled, even trying to learn from them and adopt their ways" (Maoz 2005: 176). These backpackers are stated to be undertaking a "spiritual journey", though in Maoz's approach those who consume drugs appear to be more involved in misadventure than "spiritual" journeys. While there has been no adequate research performed on the activities of Israelis in Goa, especially in the critical formative years of 1988–1993, these disparate traveller sensibilities seem to have helped shape the Israeli experience in Goa.

From the point of view of national cultural history, the experience in Goa was a rite of passage which would have considerable implications for the country, as travellers smuggled their new-found artifice back into the Holy Land. In a 2002 article in *Mushroom Magazine*, DJ, event promoter and scene commentator Boris Levit wrote that Tel-Aviv's Penguin club was central to the emerging scene in 1988: "musically directed towards the fusion between early industrial rock (Einstürzende Neubuaten), new wave (Depeche Mode), Kraftwerk, Psycik TV, Butthole Surfers and going in the direction of heavier electronica" (Levit 2002: 82). In 1990, the first psychedelic parties called Full Moon Gatherings were thrown on the Nizanim beaches. In Levit's recollections, with no more than 100 people in attendance, these clandestine raves sounded out a mix of early acid, Chicago house, Detroit techno and Frankfurt trance. At these and other events developing in almost complete isolation from scenes elsewhere, local DJs would perform variations on the Goa sound. These artists included now venerated pioneers like Avi Nissim and Lior Perlmutter (SFX and later Astral Projection), Har-El Prussky and Miko (California Sunshine), Guy Sebbag, Avi Algranati (Phreaky, Space Cat) and Ofer Dikovsky (Oforia). The first Israeli Goatrance track, "This is News of Trance", was released in 1993 by Art.Indust (Erej Jino of later Analog Pussy fame) on the compilation *Trance Mix*. By the third *Trance Mix* collection (1994), the compilation featured only Israeli tracks. In 1995, Indoor would

release the first Israeli trance artist album: *Progressive Trance*. Around this time, labels like Melodia Records, Trust In Trance Records, Phonokol and Krembo Records emerged.[5] This period was characterized by sensationalized media reports and heavy-handed police interventions in these apparent "drug havens", as DJs were arrested and equipment confiscated. Not unlike scenes in the UK and elsewhere, negative media and police attention saw parties shunted into licensed clubs, in particular the Ha Baaya ("The Problem in Tel Aviv") where Guy Sebbag and Avi Nissim performed. As Levit comments, the mood at these parties was *balagan*, Hebrew for "chaos", or "psychaos", stating that as parties were forced into closed clubbing environments, the mood shifted from "the Neo hippie tribal full moon gatherings to full on hedonism". He described the music as "a mix between the Italian ecstasy star Ramirez, German Avantgarde Techno, early club trance (age of love), minimal Acid techno (Plastikman) Hardfloor, and the local heroes SFX" (2002: 83). At this time, an appealing outlaw sensibility intensified as a result of police pressure. According to Levit, the growing possibility of police intervention precipitated a fast-paced style of power trance: "you can never know how much time you have left until the party will be shut down". Apparently this pressure led to the development of Nitzhonot,[6] a late 1990s melodic hard-trance style (145–55 bpm) with tremendous arpeggiated breakdowns which achieved mainstream success with trance subsequently growing popular in clubs, on prime-time radio playlists, at non-psychedelic music festivals and with successful crossover artists like DJ Yahel. Offering further clarification on Nitzhonot, or "victory trance", Levit stated that "Israelis had no time for long set building. The party could be closed soon. They want it all condensed into a single track".

This was the period of the so-called "war on trance" kicked off by the brutal 1993 police raid on the Tel Aviv club Impulse, followed by police interventions throughout the decade. In 1997, reacting to this attention, prominent member of the nouveau religious (a returnee to Judaism), a prestigious sponsor of the movement, and the man often identified as "the father" of Israeli psytrance, Asher Haviv, mounted a festival at Ganey Huga in the Beit Shean valley near the border with Jordan. Attracting sponsorship from AISam (Israel's Anti-drugs trust), the event – at the time the largest psychedelic trance festival in Israel, or anywhere else for that matter (with 15,000 people) – was self-identified as "Drugless" and thrown on the holiday Shavuot. Despite the ruse, one national newspaper subsequently reported "the biggest drug party in the history of the country". As Levit (2002: 85) responded, "the newspaper forgot to mention that during the entire festival there was not a single case of violence, no crime, and only 20 people were arrested for possession of marijuana". In September of 1997, 30,000 people reputedly attended the next protest event organized by Beersheba club The Forum on the beach in Nizani, which was shut down by police at 9:00 am on the second day during California Sunshine's set. These events inspired Haviv

TAZ Festival, Israel, September 2007. Photo: Graham St John.

to organize Give Trance A Chance on 9 July 1998 in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square in which 30,000 people attended. In 2000, he organized a subsequent demonstration in Jerusalem called The Gathering.

The late 1990s and subsequent years have been characterized by nostalgia for the earlier Goa period. California Sunshine wore this longing for larger times on the sleeve of 1997 release *Trance*: "long gone are the days of the summer of 89. when every new synthesized sound of morning glory caused tears in the eyes of a small bunch of hippies dancing to it in some Indian jungle or some Thai white sanded beach. those who have experienced it long to travel in time and be back in those days of never ending freedom, love and virginity. today all we can do is spread that feeling". The feeling persisted ten years hence as the flags of party crew The 3rd Empire snapped over the TAZ Festival held from 26–28 September 2007, during Sukkot. In its second year, the TAZ was held near Arad on the edge of the Negev and close to the Occupied Territories. Enabling Israelis to maintain their flight across the psychedelic frontiers while remaining a short drive from Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem and the next working week, The 3rd Empire issued the event's 2,000 temporal émigrés with small booklets designed like passports, complete with stamped daily "visas". Inside the borders of the TAZ, I went among those Schmidt refers to as Israel's "Eastern Generation" (1989–2009), which he further clarifies,

> was called in the early 1990s by the then young shock-rock-pop star Aviv Gefen "the fucked generation" and, by the end of the millennium by hip social critic Gadi Taub the generation of the "dispirited revolutionaries". This meme runs parallel with *Waltz With Bashir* style storylines that I think will more and more begin

> to emerge as people start to make the connections between the "post Lebanese war" (1982) generation and its collective loss of innocence and the discovery and acculturation of PEDMC [Psychedelic Electronic Dance Music Culture] into the fabric of Israeli society.[7]

Schmidt speculates that this period could be dubbed "Israel's 1960s", implying that slain Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin may have been – with qualification – "Israel's JFK", noting rapid swings to the right subsequent to both assassinations. Regardless of the verity of such comments, countercultural icons of the 1960s have flooded the Israeli trance imaginary. Take, for instance, Shagaat's Morrison Drops Festival held on the Dead Sea in September 2007. The promotional literature conveyed that the event was held in honour of Jim Morrison, often compared favourably with Dionysus. Idolized as "the one that has started it all", the event organizers not only identify with a psychedelic lineage, but have apparently located its divine source and authority in the Californian 1960s. A page of the festival information booklet even featured the entire lyrics to Morrison's "Scream of the Butterfly", after which this edition of the festival was named. Enabling its participants the potential to reach astounding heights at the lowest place on the planet, the event featured a predominantly full-on main stage. Whether it is the voice of Leary, or material lifted from *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, a litany of tropes and caricatures have been sampled from this epoch and remixed into promotions, track programming and conceptual décor.[8]

But if this period was Israel's "Sixties", then it was more or less limited to a specific countercultural archetype – that of the outsider/outlaw. And here I am reminded of that formative statement made by Norman Mailer (1957: 276–7) regarding the post-war, post-bomb, post-Auschwitz, generation of hipsters:

> It is on this bleak scene that a phenomenon has appeared: the American existentialist – the hipster, the man who knows that if our collective condition is to live with instant death by atomic war, relatively quick death by the State as *l'univers concentrationnaire*, or with a slow death by conformity with every creative and rebellious instinct stifled … if the fate of twentieth-century man is to live with death from adolescence to premature senescence, why then the only life-giving answer is to accept the terms of death, to live with death as immediate danger, to divorce oneself from society, to exist without roots, to set out on that uncharted journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self.

Mailer moved on to refer to the psychopathology that is dictated by these new social conditions. There is an immediate parallel to draw with the attitudes

of the so-called "fucked generation" who have not only endured a rigid "social timetable" (Maoz 2005: 163), stifling regulatory frameworks (as Levit reported), but violence (e.g. suicide bombing) associated with the ongoing conflict with Palestine. The day-to-day anxieties and insecurities associated with these historical conditions are unparalleled in most other Westernized countries. In the light of the existential relationship with mortality informing the post-WWII, atomic weapons age, hipster/beat generation identified by Mailer, along with the live-for-the-present "bomb culture" of the jazz subcultures of the 1950s UK (Nuttall 1968), and the "no future" nihilism of 1970s punk, we might better understand the sensibilities of a generation consumed by the recurrent possibility of sudden obliteration, especially given the knowledge that the Eastern Generation perfectly coincides with the period of suicide attacks committed by Palestinian militant groups (i.e. late 1980s–2008), including the acceleration of bombings during the Second Intifada (2000–2005) with Israeli fatalities reaching a peak in 2002 (237 that year).[9]

The apparent "anti-social", "Dionysian" and "psychedelic" responses to these conditions are evident in a music culture where young citizens have sought relief, shelter and detachment in increased doses and at accelerated bpm. Released from the tense world of the everyday in a militarized state, *trancistim* become immersed in altered mind states characterized as temporary *psychosis*, as illustrated in the popularly sought-after craziness of *karahana*, and the general evocation of violent states of mind, inner turmoil and disassociation. In his study of "associative word systems" within Israeli psytrance, Schmidt (2011: 100) conveys language suggestive of violence, tension and aggression, reflective, he argues, of the "reality of conflict-ridden Israel and to the fact that many *trancistim* were in combat units during their military service and are drawn to psytrance culture as a way of countering, or blocking out, the bellicose nature in their day-to-day existences". A pattern may then have formed where efforts to transcend the violence of the everyday are nevertheless shaped by an inveterate cultural warriorhood. Under these conditions, DJ-producers sought and earn reputations as volatile and unpredictable. On his debut *Delirious* (1998), full-on antagonist Oforia was "Psycho Sonic". The attitude is perhaps most evident in the country's most commercially successful act, Infected Mushroom, who appear to have responded to the demand for psycho-sonics. Their early hit "psycho" (*The Gathering*, 1999) is an affectation which seems prescient in the light of more recent albums like *Deeply Disturbed* (2003) and the EP *Becoming Insane* (2007). At its most outrageous, the hubris of the psychotically violent criminal became a favourite of Skazi and other member acts in the Chemical Mafia – including Exaile and Psychotic Micro, Void, Rocky, Paranormal Attack and Damage. On the 2004 release *Mafia*, the Chemical Mafia were self-promoted using mobster narratives from Prohibition-era Chicago. A booklet, sold with the release, illustrates an identification with gangsterism, psychotic personalities,

racketeering and being "keepers of whores and brothels" who "formed their own street society, independent of the adult world and antagonistic to it".

Israeli trance resounds with the sonic fiction of transgression, penetrating psychic frontiers, breaching the law, defying limits. The nation's legendary act, Astral Projection, provide further evidence of this contumacy. Their track "Anything is Possible" (2001) repurposes Neo's revelation from the *Matrix*: "I'm going to show them a world without rules and controls, without borders and boundaries, a world where anything is possible". And Morpheous's sampled statement, "as long as the Matrix exists the human race will never be free", could be understood according to the logic: as long as the Matrix exists there will always be outlaws. Here, the call to be free from "borders and boundaries" (very pertinent to Israel) could be read as a call to remove regulatory controls that check free enterprise and unbridled greed. This victorious mood of freedom from restraint had already influenced Nitzhonot. By the late 1990s and early twenty-first century, the quest to conquer limits was being expressed in a music that had turned away from its Goa roots – as performed in the notable work of Astral Projection – to a metal machine music[10] that would develop with accelerated bpm into "full-on". This sound emerged from HOM-Mega Productions whose first release was the compilation *Full On* (1998), which, in this early manifestation, retained a distinct Goa sound and aesthetic next to an accelerated kick drum. Indeed, the name "HOM-Mega" infers a Hebrew inflection of the pronunciation of "Om", with their moniker being the OM symbol + Mega ("ॐ Mega"), implying an amplified, accelerated or enlargened ॐ. But the full-on trajectory would eventually drop the Goa association for a "harder" aesthetic. Identified with the likes of Astrix, GMS, Talamasca, Maximum (formerly Sirius Isness), and Xerox, and with fans typecasting the music (and themselves) as "serious" and "hard" – not, therefore, "cheesy" or "emotional", associated with Goa or Nitzhonot – full-on features a tempo often paced between 145 and 150 bpm and a preference for heavy "psytars" (synthesized electric guitar riffs). While the electric guitar was augmented at the hands of synth-playing and sampledelic geeks, full-on and psychedelic cross-over artists like Skazi (Asher Swisa & Assaf Bibass) showcased the revenge of the guitar. As one enthusiast hyperbolized: "It's a ride with 100 jet thrusters. Hyper to the max and even scary at times" (Glassball 2006). The style would grow popular in Brazil, among other places, where Tiago Coutinho (2006) refers to the dissociated state of "frying" associated with a "more rapid and aggressive style of psychedelic trance". The work of Steve Goodman (2004) offers insight on the prevalence of this aesthetic. In noting that a "virtual architecture of dread defines the affective climate of early 21st century urbanism" and that, as a character from William Gibson's *Pattern Recognition* states, "we have no future because our present is too volatile," Goodman discusses late twentieth-century urban machine musics that are preoccupied with "generating soundtracks to sonically enact the demise of

Babylon". With this in mind, we might better understand the earlier work of Infected Mushroom or, for instance, the collaborative work of Moshe Kenan and Amir Dvir (aka Xerox and Illumination) whose track "Temporary Insanity" (*Nu-Clear Visions of Israel*, 2003) channels the zeitgeist: "He's losing his mind and feels it going", and whose rollicking track "Tribal Metal" (*Xerox & Illumination – Temporary Insanity*, 2004) submits the inquiry "why has my head gone numb?" Earlier, on "Bizarre", Psycraft posed the questions, "why are you fucking with our minds?!" (*Gravitech*, 2002). Years later, as a local inflection of the global darkpsy juggernaut, Post Traumatic pass comment on the situation at home via their brutal descent into carnage "Lost in the Woods" (*Nervous Disorder*, 2010).

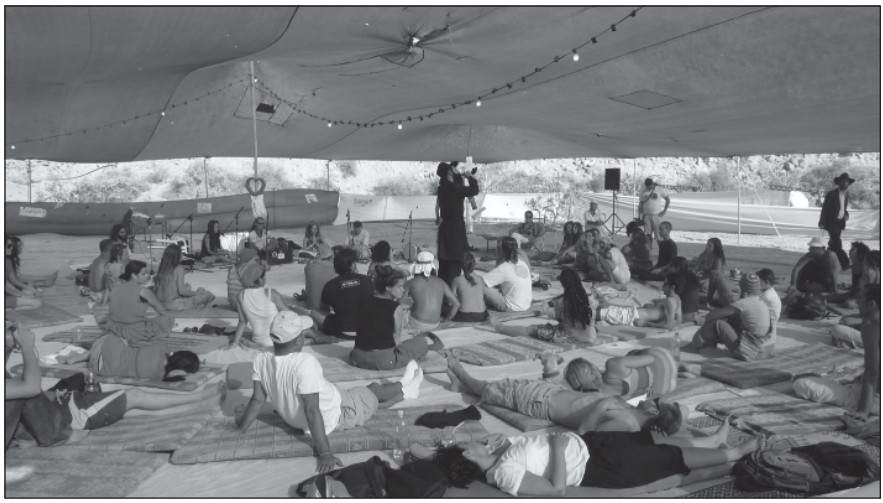
In 2007, a disaffected machinic sensibility inhered in the name of the TAZ Festival, promoted not as a "Temporary Autonomous Zone" but as a "Temporary Autonomic Zone". The re/designation was revealing. Replacing "autonomous", "autonomic" connotes the body's impulsive involuntary response to music, and at the same time indexes identification with machinic repetition. Speaking to me following his set on the second day of the event, TAZ organizer Boris Levit stated that the acronymic shift was intentional (or at least it wasn't a typographical error). The intention can only be inferred since Levit provided few details, though the quest for temporary independence from external pressures via technics of the mind and body may be an accurate reading. Rather than loosely identifying with forms of emancipation associated with anarchism or autonomism, The 3rd Empire appear to have declared their identification with an automatic/machinic sensibility, the event's name evoking participants within a compulsive sub-bass-culture treading the program loop. It might be a long stretch, but the "autonomic" identification may permit habitués to dodge the polemics of the likes of Murray Bookchin (1995), who scorned Bey's TAZ as a repository for "lifestyle anarchism", lamenting the downgrading of anarchist rebellion into a narcissistic "bourgeois deception". Perhaps it is also a distancing from the philosopher of Sufism and radical Islam who, in his *Millennium* (Bey 1996), provocatively advocated "the greater jihad", a revolutionary response – comprised of a multitude of "lesser jihad" and more permanent zones of autonomy – to the fall of Soviet communism and the triumph of capital.

Whatever the case, at the TAZ Festival I noticed the concern for "Peace in the Middle East" – i.e. the stickered slogans worn by some dance floor participants – in a context in which Israeli Muslims and Arabs (including the Bedouin) are not invited to the party. And thus one recognizes that the revolutionary will to triumph over "separation" fuelling Bey's post-Soviet project goes wanting within a culture which samples the mythos of PLUR (Peace Love Unity Respect) stripped of humanitarian substance. There is certainly no shortage of ethnic diversity among *trancistim* with descendents of those "returning" from a scattered worldwide diaspora, including most

recently those migrating from the former Soviet Union. This diversity feeds a celebratory euphoria within which participants hold unifying visions of global peace within the precincts of *mesibot*. But there are intruders in the holy lands of dance, where exclusion of ethnic "undesirables" appears requisite to a distinct – "progressive" – vibe. As Meadan (2001: 35, 44) observed, a chief term of distinction at *mesibot* is *arsim*, a derogatory designation for undesirable behaviour and those performing such behaviour – a term synonymous with lower-class *eidot-hamizrax* or Jews of North African or Middle Eastern descent, who are often identified as *shimonim*, and derided as *arsim*. This circumstance is also recognized by Schmidt (2006: 56; 2010) who observes that middle-class *Ashkenazim trancistim* actively exclude those who are not *anashim yafim* ("beautiful/nice people") or *anashim exuti'im* ("quality people"). As Schmidt clarifies, *arse* "is an Arabic word which literally means 'pimp' and in Israeli slang implies 'a jerk'". As a term applicable to anyone acting foolishly or disrespectfully towards others (especially males hassling females), almost by definition it means acting like an "Arab jerk". Populated by a significant proportion of middle-class *trancistim* – i.e. by those agents of a "progressive" sensibility whose preoccupations with the expression of difference from dominant norms by necessity excludes those who might jeopardize this vibe or "flow" – the TAZ appeared to accommodate few *arsim*, and no *shimonim*. The circumstance whereby middle-class Israelis of non-Arabic descent wield ethnic-orientated identifications to establish their distinction as *anashim yafim* or *anashim exuti'im* reveals elitism internal to psychedelic tribalism, where the freak ethos of a "global tribe" competes with the realities of "tribal" boundaries maintained through ongoing acts of distinction.

Was the sartorialized concern for "Peace in the Middle East" among some TAZ occupants a kind of liminalized fantasy ultimately, to paraphrase Terry Eagleton (1981), ensuring the maintenance of structures of privilege, and thus paralleling the artificial revolution of carnival as an insubstantial "ritual of rebellion" (Gluckman 1954)? Or is something else at stake in the carnivalesque transpiring, most poignantly, within a militarized zone? While moral authorities and cultural critics complain that Israeli psytrance is little more than a directionless escapade from responsibility and change, collapsing even under the weight of its own contradictions, others aren't so damning. Becoming "fed up with occupation and all the 'isms'", Daniel Belasco (n.d.) suggests young Israelis have turned to trance raves "for a new consciousness that envisions peace with neighbors and celebrates the value of the individual. Raves in Israel send a powerful message. In a nation so conflicted and militarized, the longing for 'PLUR' is far more political than in the United States, which enshrined the pursuit of happiness in its founding document". While the statements in the previous paragraph offer a serious indictment of the scene in Israel, they cannot, then, provide the final assessment, for the

carnival is dialogical, replete with counter-narratives and opposing voices. Psytrance is indeed contested terrain in Israel, with varying figures and factions competing to claim its symbolic payload for their particular agendas, pressing it into the service of various religious and secular ideologies. Belasco himself argued that psytrance is a means by which secular youth could "connect to the sublime aspects of Judaism" and to "overcome particularism". This view approximates that practised by Asher Haviv, for whom Israeli trance has been harnessed as a revitalization movement. During 11–15 September 2007, Haviv mounted the Holy Rave, a five-day psytrance festival held in Timna Park in the Arava desert twenty miles north of the Gulf of Aqaba and the Red Sea tourist city of Eilat. At the site of Solomon's Pillars, a series of colossal sandstone columns formed by erosion over millennia, with the mountains of the Jordan Valley to the east and the Sinai and Egypt, not far to the west – accounting for several military observation posts in the area – this was to be Haviv's grandest plan to date. Spruiking "the biggest Israeli rave ever" on walla.co.il and in various newspapers such as the weekend supplement of the popular *Maariv* and other broadsheets, running full-page ads in the *Haaretz* – the local equivalent to the *New York Times* – and appearing on a popular television news talkshow, Haviv conveyed that in mounting the event he'd been guided by God to improve the condition of Israelis, and the world. It was a noble idea, and it could only manifest within the context of what was possibly the most extravagant independent party ever planned for a remote region. Integral to the bombastics was the main-stage sound system: as stated in the entrance foldout: "48 turbo sound systems strung together on 12 meter high towers with 30 subwoofers with 20 bass speakers on the ground". Hanging wide apart, shimmering in the haze, the sound system offered monolithic accompaniment to Solomon's Pillars, before which it stood. Billed as "the first international psytrance festival in Israel" and featuring a stellar lineup – with many of Israel's popular artists alongside international acts – the festival was held over Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) and accommodated a "roots/Judaism camp" complete with Habad House hosting traditional rituals, prayers and meals. The Habad House, which included a "synagogue" and images of Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the most recent leader of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, was populated by a small force of Chabad, the outreachers of Hasidic Judaism, along with their families. With a "synagogue" at one end of the festival and "Haviv's Pillars" at the other, the Holy Rave expressed Haviv's own brand of spiritual activism, a grandiloquent fusion of traditional and emergent religion. Yet the 15–20,000 people predicted did not appear (about 1,000–1,500 did), and few participated in any of the formal religious rituals and meals planned. And while the Chabad took the opportunity to attempt to reignite the Jewish soul at sites around the festival, few participants showed interest in Hasidic Judaism. Certainly not those who were chanting "Om Namah Shivaya" on meditation mats at the



Chabad at the chill. Holy Rave, Israel, September 2007. Photo: Graham St John.

Chill-Love Holistic Village on day three of the event guided by a harmonium playing Swiss yogi. The black and white garbed out-reachers interrupted the chant to announce their calling, blow their shofar (ram's horn), and recite lines from the Talmud, with reactions ranging from contempt to outright indifference.

The Chabad also stormed the main stage at sunrise on Friday to deliver the word and distribute Tehilim books. But while they rushed the stage between sets, the trill of their shofar was drowned out by DJ Ta-ka. *Trancistim* weren't interested in religious ideology, messianic faith or shofar's trill, not when the savage religion could be obtained surfing the alpha waves under significant bass pressure. So when Haviv announced his plans for the Holy Rave, *trancistim* turned away in droves. Sagiv had provided an explanation back in 2000: "the neo-pagan ecstatic revival has filled the vacuum left by the demise of the old Zionism, and has been fueled by a mistrust felt by many youth towards anything reminiscent of the grandiose slogans and utopian promises of an earlier day". Thus, at this empty juncture in Israel's trance mission, where I literally stumbled onto the greatest rave that never happened, rather irreconcilable ideas of "religion" were being practised. For nouveau-religious activists like Haviv, the party is a context through which the Israelites may be led from servitude to the Promised Land, a vision estranging the vast majority of *trancistim* who find their "religion" in an ecstatic experience removed from the strictures of institutionalized religion. As partygoer, Alae, informed me, for those people who do not practise traditional Judaism, these events allow people to "come back to the roots … become one with the people and nature".

Desolate dance floor. Holy Rave, Israel, September 2007. Photo: Graham St John.

And, while "it's not like a traditional religion, for a lot of people this is a way of life – they drink it, they it eat, they live it".[11]

Doof Australia

Psytrance has not experienced the heights of popularity in Australia as it has in Israel. Consequently, it does not figure in the public imagination and nor is it pressed into the service of diverse national, cultural and intellectual narratives – religious or secular – in the scale and frequency apparent in Israel. While this movement has fomented below the popular cultural radar, its events have been significant sites for a variety of alternative experiments. Indeed, Australia, a continent over fifty times the landmass of Israel, has accommodated numerous alternative enclaves and events which have long been destinations for local travellers and those from outside the country, including Israelis. Goa/psytrance became part of an Australian countercultural mosaic possessing the fusional, multi-mediated imperative associated with visionary arts culture. Not simply a transplant, nor a hyper-simulated transposition of elements of the former counterculture, psychedelic trance built a relationship with extant experiments where it has had clear shaping influences in some instances and at other times has been met with strong opposition. When the Goa vibe was carried to Australia in the early 1990s it had to build relationships with scenes and art collectives possessing anarchist and eco-activist objectives. This was the case at locations along the eastern coast, principally Melbourne, Sydney, Byron Bay and Cairns. A seminal event transpired in Melbourne in 1991 at

LizMania's basement in the old biscuit factory at Munster Terrace. According to co-founder of the Mutoid Waste Co, Robin Cooke (2001: 143), who had just then moved to Australia from the UK: "We flooded the dance floor with ultra violet paint and water, Anna and Karen built a Skull Throne around the only toilet, Hugh McSpeddon's projections adorned the silos above us, and 500 people 'went off'!" Playing his first genuine gig in Australia, Fred Disko was one of the DJs performing that night, laying down mixes from Goa.[12] The party was the first of Cooke's Earthdream events. Mounted over a twenty-year period, these have been seminal occasions for cross-genred experiments and intercultural collaborations.[13]

Melbourne's role in the Australian psychedelic trance/techno scene is evidenced by festivals including those operated by Earthcore (the first held at Mt Franklin on 29 January 1993), Psy-Harmonics, Psycorroboree, Green Ant, Rainbow Serpent, Tribeadelic and later Maitreya and Strawberry Fields, as well as warehouse and club party crews including Soma in Flinder's Lane and events operated by Melbourne Underground Development (M.U.D.). M.U.D. parties were a crucial hub of the Melbourne techno movement between 1992–2000. Their Every Picture Tells A Story (EPTAS) parties, and in particular those held at the old Dockland's Cotton Mill named the Global Village, were memorable for unique décor, installation art and video graphics to which co-founder Phil Voodoo, Sioux, Robin Cooke and many others contributed. They also showcased Melbourne-based producers like Zen Paradox (Steve Law), Voiteck and Slieker. As an alternative arts precinct with no noise restrictions and relatively unhindered artistic freedoms enjoyed for the better part of ten years, the Global Village was a formative Melbourne institution, unparalleled by world standards. While EPTAS were not strictly Goa/trance events (and resisted this label), Melbourne would become a centre of psychedelic electronic music as was early evidenced by Psy-Harmonics, the techno-trance label and party outfit founded by Ollie Olsen, Bruce Butler and Andrew Till in 1993, and more recently evidenced by Zenon Records and the Interview crew. Collaborating with and releasing material from the likes of Third Eye (Gus Till and Olsen), Zen Paradox, Lumukanda (Dominic Hogan), Mystic Force (Russell Hancorne), Masaray (Masayuki Kurihara and Ray Castle), Psyko Disko, and Rip Van Hippy (Geoffrey Hales), Psy-Harmonics became an enduring platform for genre-defying electronic psychedelia. While the label has hosted a diverse stable throughout its history, the Eastern influence was clearly evident on one of the label's first releases, Third Eye's *Ancient Future* (1993).[14]

Psy-Harmonic's second compilation, *Dancing to the Sound of the Sun* (1995), featured a passage written by music scholars Fred Cole and Michael Hannan[15] in the promotions for the release, introducing the scene in Byron Bay and hinterlands.

> The Byron Beach scene is a split between surfer, newage-sanyassin-yuppies, bohemian spiritualists and wholelistic [*sic*] counterculture misfits, many who have drifted in from the Asia traveller circuit or are completely disenfranchised from urban culture. This psychotropic, rainbow belt, east edge, part of Aussie has been notorious for its Goa-style, tribedelic meltdown, beach and forest parties over the last few years. It's the full sunrise bliss experience in pure, untainted nature, in an extremely mellow, tolerant, country environment.

Also referring to "feral/techno" fusion manifest in groups like Trance Goddess and Curried Grooves, this enthusiastic promotion for the emergent scene in the "Rainbow Region" of New South Wales – which, since the 1973 Aquarius Festival in Nimbin, attracted an alternative population from within Australia and around the world – highlighted novel aesthetics created from existing elements. The fusional imperative was native to emergent regional labels like Edgecore, Digital Psionics and Demon Tea Recordings, and to formative events like Creative Terra which emerged in 1992. Byron Bay celebration artist, David Bleach, provided the background to this seminal event, the product of a local arts-activist culture:

> An emergent arts based tribal collective had gathered pace through Melbourne and then the 1992 Adelaide Fringe Festival with the Imagineer events, before collaborating with their ilk in Byron Bay. Often referred to as "ferals", this group shared an environmental, spiritual and DIY creative ethos: derived from activists, anarchists, punks, hippies and artists (including performance, installation, visual, video, lighting, digital, DJs and musicians); influenced in part by English groups like Mutoid Waste, early English Acid House, Sydney's 80s arts based dance parties like Secret Garden, Canberra's theatre of spectacle Splinters, Ken Kesey & The Merry Pranksters, as much as some participants in earlier Goa parties; they formed a loose "tribe", responsible for spawning events across a blossoming national scene.[16]

From the mid to late 1990s, the Creative Terra protagonists established an infamous "free" beach and bush party scene and collaborated with local psychedelic artists, notably Electric Tipi. Along with an influx of international travellers, the region saw the emergence of a network of party crews, including Jupiter 3, Olli Wisdom's Space Tribe, Silicone Buddha, Heartkore and Bee Unlimited. Between 1995–1997, the Byron Bay area hosted the Beyond the Brain events, notably those held at the Epicentre, a disused whaling abattoir transformed into an alternative arts centre and labyrinthine multimedia party

palace. By world standards, events hosted at the Epicentre were novel fusions of dance party and visionary art,[17] and representative of the region's stature as a centre for artists and travellers.

Artists associated with Creative Terra and other Byron Region events had close connections with the Melbourne scene, Cairn's Bizcirkus, and Sydney's Vibe Tribe. The latter had emerged in 1993 with direct roots in the anarcho-punk scene epitomized by the Jellyheads collective who had overseen the transition from punk to electronic music in the early 1990s and had held a series of acid techno parties called Wobble (see St John 2010b). Vibe Tribe, who held parties in Sydney Park until police violently broke up their party, Freequency, in April 1995, were opposed to the commercial exploitation of electronic music and the privatization of inner-city space, attracting diverse activists and artists to their number, among them Kol Dimond (Fatty Acidz) and Jeh Kaelin (JackieOnnasid), who had visited Goa in 1990 and returned inspired by the "cosmic dance". Dimond, who had a background in punk – with Kaelin, he was member of Sydney band Fred Nihilists – and who became co-founder, with John Jacobs, of Organarchy Sound Systems, regarded trance "as a potential vehicle for social change". As stated in an essay circulated on an insert included with Organarchy's CD *BPM Conspiracies* (1999), Dimond believed that, by comparison to punk's negativity, "trance was the real thing … it seemed to have it all, it was accessible to the point where if you could possibly make yourself dance to anything you could dance to this". Furthermore, "it had no blatant overtones in its message, it was a faceless music made by anti-heroes who at a time were no richer, poorer or any different than the rest of us". But while embracing the potential for a "fusion of urban political activity and spiritual enlightenment", Dimond grew disillusioned by the late 1990s, stating, in the same source, that trance simply "became a hedonistic playground for white (dominantly) middle-class entrepreneurs". Expressing a common grievance, in his estimate, "those with the most influence are no longer seen at anti-uranium mine demonstrations … protesting our rights for a safer and cleaner planet … nor are they seen at forest blockades … protecting the very wilderness that they call their garden" (Dimond 1999).

This response is not unusual in an arts scene with strong anarchist roots and eco-radical pretensions (of the kind hardly evident in Israel), which saw the emergence of the "doof", the Australian moniker for "party" widely used from Sydney and north-coast NSW, to Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Cairns in Far North Queensland. "Doof" is an onomatopoetic word – imitating or suggesting the source of the sound that it describes – coined at the door of a shared house in Newtown, Sydney, in 1992, when the Non Bossy Posse collective had been, according to occupant Pete Strong, "working out how to sequence a drum machine". Pounding on the door, "several beats per minute faster than the jam", their neighbour, a German woman, bawled her

grievance, "what is this DOOF, DOOF, DOOF all night long?" (Strong 2001: 110).[18] Curiously, one of the chief annual psytrance events in Israel is called DOOF, operated by DOOF Records which appears to have emerged independently,[19] although there is considerable cultural exchange between Israeli and Australian scenes, with many Israelis visiting Australia for its summer festival season. Like its Goa forebears, a core element of the "doof" is its decentralized ethos, a theme it shares with techno parties elsewhere and which can have a variety of expressions, from the structure of its organizing body to the orchestration of events, which are not at all separate elements. Among the most seminal series of psytrance doofs were the Trancelements parties held in Victoria, Tasmania and NSW in the mid to late 1990s. These events carried the Goa party sonic-architectonic and featured a "3D" dance floor effect, which was especially notable at Toonumbar, NSW, c.1995 where the Japanese PA engineer Shiro Ono was in attendance. Ray Castle and Nick Taylor played at this party, with Castle recalling that the "wizard" Ono reset the entire PA into a circular set-up from which "the Aussie crews learnt a great deal".[20] A "3D dance floor" design was later implemented by Melbourne's Psycorroboree at their Gaian Thump parties held at Opoeia in Victoria's Otway Ranges south west of Melbourne in 1998 and 1999, which co-founder Eamon Jungle Wyss explained were "an expression of the greater decentralized ethos of the Techno cultural movement". Wyss had been inspired by parties in Manali in 1993, where two large speaker stacks were positioned on one side of the dance floor facing a DJ booth on the other, "creating a 3D effect". By contrast to the standard arrangement with the DJ flanked by speaker stacks, where dancers will typically face the DJ like a "mass of soldiers" marching to "the front", with the 3D arrangement, "there is no 'front' and 'back' of the floor". He outlined the experience: "what you get is a dance floor of endlessly diverse possibilities in people's creative expression. Dancing becomes no longer a contrived, learned experience by copying the person in front of you. Because there is no front! Instead it provides the space for people to just simply let go, turning it from a dance into a sea of beautiful movement". At Gaian Thump I in 1998, electro-acoustic musician Terry McDermott, Wyss and Psycorroboree set this idea into effect by mounting a "quasi-quadraphonic sound system", which enabled sound to "literally spin around us on the dance floor … like sonic DNA".[21]

While a doof is not exclusively a psytrance event, it has been central to the designation of a psychedelic techno party, most often held, like the Gaian Thump events, beyond the city limits. Growing into an institution, the Australian "doof" is held in response to multiple conditions in the lifeworld of its participants. Like *mesibot*, it is a topos for extreme leisure, but by comparison to the former, they aren't always "one night stands" but full camping experiences often beginning Friday night and extending over "long weekends". The annual extended New Year's Eve vacation provided